
LESSON 4

AMPHIBIOUS PLANNING PROCESS

Amphibious operation--an attack launched from the sea by naval and landing forces, embarked in ships or craft involving a landing on a hostile or potentially hostile shore.

-- Joint Pub 3-02,
Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations

Introduction

Purpose

This lesson provides an overview of the amphibious planning process and the basic sequence of command and staff actions that allow the Navy and landing force staffs to conduct parallel and concurrent planning.

Why Study the Amphibious Planning Process?

Although the amphibious planning process generally follows previously presented planning models, it is unique among these models due to the nature of amphibious operations.

Planning amphibious operations is an iterative process between two staffs during which a mission is assigned, decisions are made to accomplish the mission, and products are distributed to ensure success from the sea.

The concurrent and parallel nature of amphibious planning requires MAGTF planners to adapt the doctrinal sequence of MAGTF staff planning as presented in FMFM 3-1, *Marine Corps Command and Staff Relationship*, and the Marine Corps planning process.

Introduction, Continued

**Relationship to
Other Instruction**

This lesson

wExpands the doctrinal relationship between the Commander, Amphibious Task Force (CATF) and the Commander of the Landing Force (CLF) during amphibious planning

wAmplifies command and control, a critical aspect of the amphibious planning and execution process

wProvides another doctrinal operational planning process that complements previous lessons on the Marine Corps Planning Process and the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (JOPES)

Study Time

This lesson, including the issues for consideration, will require about 2.5 hours of study.

Educational Objectives

Joint Doctrinal Amphibious Planning Process Discuss the current joint doctrinal amphibious planning process including its purpose and its relationship to both the Marine Corps and to other deliberate planning processes. [JPME Areas 2(a) and 2(d)]

CATF and CLF Explain the relationship between CATF and CLF and list their responsibilities during planning for amphibious operations. [JPME Area 2(a)]

Joint Amphibious Doctrine Discuss the current joint amphibious doctrine for planning and conducting amphibious operations. [JPME Area 2(a)]

**JPME Areas/
Objectives/Hours
(accounting data)** 2/a/1.0
2/d/0.5

Discussion

Command of Forces

While the MAGTF doctrinal sequence of staff planning is oriented primarily toward operations ashore, the essential naval character of amphibious operations requires that command of all forces be vested in the Commander, Amphibious Task Force (CATF) from commencement until termination of the amphibious operation as directed in doctrine.

Amphibious planning is discussed in Part II of Joint Pub 3-02, *Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations*. The information in this reference should be applied to your study of the Marine Corps planning process.

Command Relationships

First, the process of making the basic decisions is not integrated with the sequence of staff actions.

Second, only dialogue between the CATF and Commander Landing Forces (CLF/MAGTF commander) is discussed.

The participation of subordinate MAGTF elements in determining selected basic decisions and the decision process regarding the concept of operations are not explained.

The change in command relationships for major units during the conduct of operations may stress the need to employ various planning processes over a specific span of time. As an example, the terms CLF and MAGTF commander often are used interchangeably.

By definition, a MAGTF can be established and organized to conduct an amphibious operation, and therefore, according to doctrine, the MAGTF commander becomes CLF.

As CLF, this commander has coequal status for planning and reports directly to CATF upon embarkation until termination of the amphibious operation. This change in command relationships requires the CLF and his staff to use the amphibious planning process through the termination of the amphibious operation.

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Discussion, Continued

**MAGTF
Commander**

After the amphibious operation has terminated, the term CLF no longer applies, and the commander becomes the MAGTF Commander. The MAGTF now uses the Marine Corps planning process.

Planning Process

The planning process reviewed in this lesson is the most formal way to plan for an amphibious operation. Many of the steps shown may receive less emphasis in different operations.

The most important consideration to remember is that doctrine is a guide for planning and is affected by the situation, mission, and amount of planning time available.

**Amphibious
Planning Cycle**

The steps of the amphibious planning cycle are outlined in detail in the information sheet "Amphibious Planning Process," part of the readings for this lesson. The information sheet was developed from doctrine contained in Joint Pub 3-02.1, *Joint Doctrine for Landing Force Operations*.

These steps overlap during the planning phase of an amphibious operation. They are continuous and sequential, are conducted concurrently and in parallel between the CATF and CLF staffs, and address the twelve basic decisions of the planning cycle.

Decision Making

The planning cycle is approached from the perspective of the CLF/MAGTF commander; however, keep in mind that the CATF must also follow a similar sequence of planning with separate concerns for the Navy.

The CLF must be aware of Navy capabilities, responsibilities, and operational procedures to effectively support the parallel planning and the decision making process.

The emphasis throughout the following planning requirements is on decision making, exercising doctrine, the planning cycle, and familiarization with amphibious doctrinal publications.

Required Reading

***Joint Pub
Readings***

Joint Pub 3-02.1, *Joint Doctrine for Landing Force Operations*, chapters III and IV. Find this reading in the *Joint Pub Readings Vol. II* (8800), pp. 611 to 652. The uniqueness of amphibious planning stems from the interrelationships among the ground, sea, and air forces that support and sustain the assault.

For Further Study

Supplemental Readings

The readings listed are **not** required. They are provided as recommended sources of additional information about topics in this lesson that may interest you. They will increase your knowledge and augment your understanding of this lesson.

wJoint Pub 3-02, *Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations*, Chapter 3, "Approach to Planning and Basic Decisions" (review only).

wNDP 1, *Naval Warfare*.

wAJP 1(A), *Allied Joint Operations Doctrine*.

wATP 8, *Doctrine for Amphibious Operations*.

Issues For Consideration

**Twelve Basic
Decisions**

Summarize the 12 basic decisions in the amphibious planning process. State who has responsibility for making them.

Fifteen Steps

What are the 15 steps in the amphibious planning process?

**Planning
Compatibility**

Are the amphibious planning, Marine Corps planning, and joint planning processes compatible? Why learn another planning process?